

Social Science 2VO3: The Social Science of Popular Culture

Instructor: Dr. David Penner

Room and Time: JHE 376 Wednesday Evenings 7:00 – 10:00

Email: Via Avenue

Office Hours: By appointment.

Course Description

This course investigates, through three mediums of popular culture (film, television, music), what popular culture has to offer as a type of social science. What does popular culture have to show us about gender, authority, sexuality, image, family, institutions, social arrangements, hope, beauty, money, success, protest and many other topics as well? Through a consideration of both the history and the present of these mediums we will explore how popular culture is both a reflection of who we are and a suggestion of who we might become.

Optional Texts

Stanley, Bob. *Yeah! Yeah! Yeah! The story of pop music from Bill Haley to Beyonce.*

https://www.amazon.ca/Yeah-Story-Music-Haley-Beyonce/dp/0393351688/ref=sr_1_2?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1513027527&sr=1-2&keywords=yeah+yeah+yeah

Thomson, David. *Television.* https://www.amazon.ca/Television-David-Thomson/dp/0500519161/ref=sr_1_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1513027607&sr=1-1&keywords=thomson+television

Method of Evaluation

Reflection Papers (4 x 17.5) = 70%

Four times during the course of the term (see Week by Week Outline for Assignment Dates) you will be asked to produce a one single-spaced page reflection on one of four provided questions.

The questions will be posted on the Avenue website one week before they are due. Electronic submissions through Avenue are the desired method for your submission of the assignment. The assignment is a reflection paper not a demonstration of your ability to repeat the thoughts of the course instructor. You are asked to provide your own thought. Your own thought is not a long held opinion or a reaction but instead represents your fresh thoughtful consideration of the topic being addressed. You will be graded in relation to the depth of your insight and the clarity with which you express your thought. Brilliance is not expected or demanded. Honest and thoughtful engagement is a prerequisite to a high mark on these assignments.

Final Take Home Exam: 30%

The final exam will consist of a choice of essay questions of which you will be asked to respond to one in a take home essay. It will be set to be due during the exam period.

Grade Appeals: If you think that your reflection papers have been inappropriately graded please take the following steps. Write a note explaining why you think the grade is inappropriate. Attach this note to your paper and return it to the person who marked it. If you are still unsatisfied after discussing it with the grader, bring it to the attention of the course instructor. If you are unsatisfied after discussing it with the instructor, bring it to the attention of the Associate Dean of Social Sciences. Appeals of final exams are made through the registrar office.

IF YOU MISS A TEST OR REQUIRE AN EXTENSION ON AN ASSIGNMENT... You must receive authorization from your faculty office (e.g., Social Sciences, Humanities, Business, etc.; whichever faculty you are registered in) for any accommodations to be considered.

If you are not a Social Science student, you must find out what the procedures are in your faculty. In Social Science, students take the appropriate documentation (e.g., physician's note) to the faculty office. Personnel there determine whether it is an acceptable, properly documented reason. If it is, they will send the course instructor a notice authorizing alternate arrangements to be made with you. Doing so is entirely at the discretion of the instructor; the faculty office simply authorizes us to permit them or not. It is up to the instructor to determine what sort of accommodations to make. Possible examples are: a makeup test; reallocation of marks; extra work; etc. Instructions for assignments will include information about late assignments without permission and the late-submission penalties. These will be enforced in any case where the above procedure for extensions has not been followed, without exception.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

It is up to students to familiarize themselves well with McMaster's rules of academic integrity. Often, students may have no intention of contravening such rules, but do so because they are not thoroughly familiar with them. It is your responsibility as a university student, however, to be so, and not the responsibility of instructors to inform you of them after the fact. A thorough discussion of the topic can be found at: http://www.mcmaster.ca/senate/academic/ac_integrity.htm Take special note of Appendix 3.

There will be strict enforcement of academic honesty in written assignments and during all tests. Students found to be, or seriously expected of being, in breach of the rules of academic integrity will be reported to the Office of Academic Integrity.

Keep all notes and drafts you make when writing a paper. If there is any question of the integrity of your paper, you will be given the opportunity to submit these notes and drafts as evidence of the work you did. Also, retain an electronic copy of your final submission. Do not delete it until the course is over and final grades have been received.

Items the University Insists Be On Course Outlines

1. ACADEMIC INTEGRITY POLICY

You are expected to exhibit honesty and use ethical behaviour in all aspects of the learning process. Academic credentials you earn are rooted in principles of honesty and academic integrity. Academic dishonesty is to knowingly act or fail to act in a way that results or could result in unearned academic credit or advantage. This behaviour can result in serious consequences, e.g. the grade of zero on an assignment, loss of credit with a notation on the transcript (notation reads: "Grade of F assigned for academic dishonesty"), and/or suspension or expulsion from the university. It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes academic dishonesty. For information on the various types of academic dishonesty please refer to the Academic Integrity Policy, located at www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity

The following illustrates only three forms of academic dishonesty:

1. Plagiarism, e.g. the submission of work that is not one's own or for which other credit has been obtained.
2. Improper collaboration in group work.
3. Copying or using unauthorized aids in tests and examinations.

2. TURNITIN.COM LANGUAGE FOR COURSE OUTLINES

In this course we will be using a web-based service (Turnitin.com) to reveal plagiarism. Students will be expected to submit their work electronically to Turnitin.com and in hard copy so that it can be checked for academic dishonesty. Students who do not wish to submit their work to Turnitin.com must still submit a copy to the instructor. No penalty will be assigned to a student who does not submit work to Turnitin.com. All submitted work is subject to normal verification that standards of academic integrity have been upheld (e.g., on-line search, etc.). To see the Turnitin.com Policy, please go to www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity

3. LANGUAGE FOR AVENUE TO LEARN OR OTHER ON-LINE COMPONENTS

In this course we will be using Avenue to Learn. Students should be aware that, when they access the electronic components of this course, private information such as first and last names, user names for the McMaster e-mail accounts, and program affiliation may become apparent to all other students in the same course.

The available information is dependent on the technology used. Continuation in this course will be deemed consent to this disclosure. If you have any questions or concerns about such disclosure please discuss this with the course instructor.

4. ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATION OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Students who require academic accommodation must contact Student Accessibility Services (SAS) to make arrangements with a Program Coordinator. Academic accommodations must be arranged for each term of study. Student Accessibility Services can be contacted by phone 905-525-9140 ext. 28652 or e-mail sas@mcmaster.ca. For further information, consult McMaster University's Policy for Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities.

5. POLICY FOR MODIFYING A COURSE:

The instructor and university reserve the right to modify elements of the course during the term. The university may change the dates and deadlines for any or all courses in extreme circumstances. If either type of modification becomes necessary, reasonable notice and communication with the students will be given with explanation and the opportunity to comment on changes. It is the responsibility of the student to check her/his McMaster email and course websites weekly during the term and to note any changes.

6. E-MAIL COMMUNICATION POLICY:

Effective September 1, 2010, it is the policy of the Faculty of Social Sciences that all email communication sent from students to instructors (including TAs), and from students to staff, must originate from the student's own McMaster University e-mail account.

This policy protects confidentiality and confirms the identity of the student. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that communication is sent to the university from a McMaster account. If an instructor becomes aware that a communication has come from an alternate address, the instructor may not reply at his or her discretion. Email

Forwarding in MUGSI: <http://www.mcmaster.ca/uts/support/email/emailforward.html>

*Forwarding will take effect 24-hours after students complete the process at the above link.

7. MCMASTER STUDENT ABSENCE FORM:

The McMaster Student Absence Form (MSAF) (<http://www.mcmaster.ca/msaf/>) is a self-reporting tool for Undergraduate Students to report MEDICAL absences that last up to 5 days and provides the ability to request accommodation for any missed academic work (that is less than 30% of the course grade). Please note, this tool cannot be used during any final examination period. You may submit a maximum of ONE Academic Work Missed request per term. It is YOUR responsibility to follow up with your instructor immediately regarding the nature of the accommodation. If you are absent for more than 5 days, exceed one request per term, are absent for a reason other than medical, or have missed work worth 30% or more of the final grade, you MUST visit your Faculty Office. You may be required to provide supporting documentation. This form should be filled out when you are about to return to class after your absence.

DISABILITY ISSUES

If you require special accommodations due to an impairment, please contact the Centre for Student Development for more information: <http://csd.mcmaster.ca/> Do this at the start of the term, if at all possible. Note that all accommodations must be specified at the outset.

Week By Week Lecture Outline

January 10th: Introduction to Course: Approaches to Popular Culture

Film

January 17th: Funny as ****: Rolling Eyes and Laughter in Movies

January 24th: Heroes, Anti-heroes and Visions of Success

January 31st: Fantasies and Dystopias Films: Dreading our Hopes for the Future

First Reflection Paper Questions Distributed

February 7th: What Are You Afraid Of? Dangerous Children and Supernatural Disruptions:
Horror Movies as Barometer

Music

February 14th: The Image of Gender and Romance

Second Reflection Paper Questions Distributed

February 28th: A Changing History of Self- Esteem: Honesty and Self Love

March 7th: Anger and Protest

Television

March 14th: Institutions and Corruption: Everything Is Broken.

Third Reflection Paper Questions Distributed

March 21st: The Past is No Longer Another Country: The Rewriting of History

March 28th: Money and Beauty

Fourth Reflection Paper Questions Distributed

April 4th: Buffoons and Why We Love Them (And Maybe Do Not Like Ourselves)

